



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

December 2005

BRMUG Information

Member Meetings

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday evening of each month at BlueBonnet Library at 6:30 P.M.

Planning Meetings

The Thursday after the regular member meeting the planning meeting is held at 6:15 at Calendars on Perkins near Essen.

About BRMUG

For more information call the User Group President, Isaac Traxler, 225-926-1552 or send e-mail to info@brmug.org or check our web page at <http://www.brmug.org/>

BRMUG Volunteers

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 Contact anyone above if you have suggestions for BRMUG.

After the Meeting

Join us at Brewbachers on Bluebonnet after the BRMUG meeting: fun, food, open format. Get to know each other.

Newsletter Articles

Please submit newsletter articles to newsletter@brmug.org. Articles are printed on a space available basis. Submissions are welcome!

The December meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Brewbachers** on **December 15th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This will not be a normal meeting. Instead, each year at this time of year we have our *Annual Holiday Gathering*. Each of the eleven other months of the year we do some sort of presentation (hopefully informative). Other than the BRMUG Picnic in the summer, we do not have an opportunity to just sit and talk and get to know each other. That is what this gathering is all about. So please drop by, have a bite to eat and lets get to know each other a little better. If you need help getting there (<http://www.brmug.org/about-brmug.html>).

Meeting is at Bluebonnet Brewbachers!
 Visit <http://www.brmug.org/next-meeting.html> for more information.

November Meeting Review

Last month we talk about iTunes, iTunes Music Store and Pocasts. It is amazing to see how far iTunes has come since its initial release. It really is a good music management system. iTMS has come even farther. From a place to buy some MP3s, it has grown in to the dominant online music distribution system. It is one of the few things that can bargain with the music industry. And now it does video. It is only a matter of time before it becomes a source of movies (maybe Apple will release PVR software and add movies?).

I hope you all enjoyed the meeting and I hope a few questions were answered. We just briefly mentioned Podcasting. This is a topic that warrants its own meeting at some point in the future. So keep an eye out for it.

Thanks again for helping us help each other.

AAPL

Deja vu -- it appears that I get to reuse last month's AAPL article, one more time. Once again Apple has set all time record high values for their stock. It is currently at \$74.33, about \$0.50 less than its high of \$74.83. At a Market Cap over \$60 billion, Apple is a very large company.

In spite of the various possible trouble spots on the horizon (record companies

wanting to raise prices, Intel transition, competitors, ...) Wall Street seems to believe Apple has a very bright future. I sure hope they are. In the interim, lets just enjoy the prosperity.

Podcast -- It's Official

The New Oxford American Dictionary has not accepted the word podcast for inclusion in their dictionary (I guess we were ahead of the times last month). This is just another indication that Apple is changing the world.

iTMS Video Offerings Expand

iTunes Music Store recently expanded their already successful video offerings. TV offerings now include Desperate Housewives, Law & Order, Lost, Surface, The Suite Life of Zack & Cody, The Office, Monk, That's So Raven, Battlestar Galactica, Dragnet, Adam 12, Knight Rider, Alfred Hitchcock Presents, Night Stalker, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, and Late Night With Conan O'Brien.

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This is a rather diverse selection of shows. Apparently Apple (or the networks) are trying to determine which categories will sell and to what extent. At a \$1.99 an episode, Apple and the networks are trying a new distribution method other than DVD Box Sets.

Apple Releases Aperture

Apple released Aperture. Aperture is a software package for managing photographic images in RAW format. It is not a editing package, but rather a image collection management system that supports RAW format. This is Apple's attempt to produce a tool for professional photographers (just as Final Cut Pro has become the tool for videographers).

Aperture is an ambitious product. A number of issues have already come up. ArsTechnia has a very detailed (and not overly positive) review (<http://arstechnica.com/reviews/apps/aperture.ars>). In spite of this review, Aperture has a lot of promise.

Mac OS X Update

Apple released an update for Mac OS X at the end of November. The update was mostly a collection of security updates. Macintosh discussed a series of problems various people had with this update. In general it seems to be safe to install, although experience is beginning to indicate that you should clean your Desktop. Some problems did result from files on the Desktop with special characters in their name. Also of interest, some users have reported significant performance gains by cleaning off their Desktop. So instead, we have Front Page. It is a nice front-end for the existing software modules and does add remote control. Of course, we want and expect more from Apple.

SONY and DRM

SONY is in an interesting position. They produce music that they sell (one of the big recording companies). They also sell devices to listen to music on. Due to piracy concerns, these two enterprises seem to be at odds with each other.

The music arm of SONY has been very adamant about DRM (Digital Rights Management). The dream of DRM is to allow users (people who own music) to enjoy it fully while protecting the copyright holders (the music companies) from misuse of their product.

The idea behind DRM is not so far-fetched. I mean, you have a key and you

lock your car to prevent unauthorized use. In this case, the key is the magic to authorize use. You are free to make as many keys as you wish -- but you have only one car. This system works well because it is not easy (and cheap) to duplicate a car.

The problem we are facing is not new. Book publishers have faced this problem since the advent of copy machines. In most cases, the hassle of photocopying a book and binding the copy combined with the cost per page has made this problem not a huge concern (except for textbooks costing over \$100).

The recording industry has a unique problem. When it first became possible for consumers to duplicate music, questions arose. The recording industry was happy to allow duplicates of their music for personal use. The poor quality of user made recordings combined with the hassle made it look like the music industry would follow the model of the book industry.

But then technology stepped in. Technology brought us a way to duplicate a music CD with zero quality loss. And then the cost of media plummeted and the software got a lot easier. And the recording industry got nervous. But they stayed relatively quiet while trying to get Congress to legislate hardware copy protection in devices.


And the music industry's big brother, the video industry came along. The video industry has had much better luck with hardware copy protection -- so far.

And so DRM became a hot topic. At first, DRM sounded good. It would allow me to listen to my music but keep others from stealing it.

But DRM brought problems. First, nobody can agree on a single DRM standard. This is true for many reasons. The obvious one that no one trusts anyone else's standard is very true. And rightfully so. As far as I know, all DRM systems that exist now are able to be defeated. So the recording industry finds itself bickering over DRM technology while looking for the magic solution.

And then the consumer found out what DRM really means. It means hassle -- most of the time. DRM winds up making it hard or impossible to listen to your music in the way you desire many times. The recording industry promised us that we could buy a copy of a song and listen to it on all of our music playing equipment without extra fees as long as it was for

personal use. But then we discover that DRM keeps us from having a way to buy a song from iTunes and listen to it on our non-Apple MP3 player without a hassle. By the way, this is true everywhere, if you are not using AAC (Apple's solution), you are using another restricted solution that limits how and where you can hear your music.

And so the record companies once again turned to technology for help. Technology caused the problem, maybe it can solve the problem. The current result of that are various forms of copy-protection built into some audio CDs. In fact, the first problem that was encountered, was that these audio CDs are not CDs. Very strict standards exist stating what can go on a disk and still have it wear the CD logo. If an audio disk contains copy-protection, it cannot have the logo to the right  on it. Period.

Not having this logo did not deter the music industry. They went ahead paying various companies to produce copy-protection schemes. SONY has used numerous different schemes on various audio disks.

When consumers first started complaining about not being able to listen to a music disk on their computer, the recording industry pretty much ignored the complaints.

And technology defeated the early copy-protection. Just a little more hassle for the consumer.

And the war escalated. Skip forward. The latest try that SONY commissioned to have implemented went to far -- way to



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far. On Windows, the music disk, installed code in the operating system, without warning, that prevented the OS from reporting the existence of certain files (based on name). Other things were also done. End result, SONY altered the operating system, without notice and actually produced a situation that viruses could utilize to attack your machine.

Many more details exist. Much else can be said. But simply -- SONY went to far.

by Isaac Traxler

Macintosh

For years I have read Macintosh (<http://www.macintosh.com>). It started as a column in MacWeek (a weekly print magazine of the past). When the magazine went away, Ric Ford brought Macintosh to the Internet.

Macintosh has always been a little hard to explain. Sometimes it was pure speculation. Sometimes it was rumor. Other times it was an amazingly thorough analysis of some product (hardware or software). Sometimes it was a laundry list of new products.

Over time, Macintosh has changed. When Steve Jobs returned to Apple and we all wondered about the future of Apple. Up until that time, Macintosh had been one of the few positive places predicting a positive future. As Job's decisions puzzled us all, Ric Ford asked some public questions. We all knew that Macintosh was popular. We learned how popular and influential it was. The next day, Ric announced that Steve Jobs had spoken privately with him and that Steve had a plan that convinced Ric that it was not time to abandon Apple.

As you can see, Macintosh has been around a long time. It has been influential for a long time. It is a combination of product announcements, user feedback, special reports and all kinds of other stuff.

Macintosh is a daily updated web site. You can see announcements of new software releases. You see current news that is relevant to the Apple world. You see in depth product discussions. Recently, they have started doing surveys. Ric has maintained a very high standard over the years. He clearly indicates when something is speculation. I highly encourage everyone to make this site part of your daily reading.

For those of you who have been reading Macintosh for a while, I am sure you have seen its evolution over the years. Several changes in recent times have struck me.

The first thing is subtle. For quite some time Macintosh has kept a section on Macintosh Marginalization -- lists of services or programs that are dropping Macintosh support. In recent

2005 Meeting Calendar			
January 20	iPhoto Introduction	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
February 17	Keynote 2	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
March 17	Tiger Preview	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
April 21	Pages	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
May 19	Epson CX6400	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
June 16	Software Gems	Isaac, Don & Glenn	Bluebonnet Library
July 21	Garage Band	Glenn Matherne	Bluebonnet Library
August 18	iChat A/V	Don & Isaac	Bluebonnet Library
September 15	Katrina & Apple	All	Bluebonnet Library
October 20	Alternatives to High Cost Software	Don & Isaac	Bluebonnet Library
November 17	iTunes, iTMS, Podcasts	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
December 15	Holiday Gathering	N/A	Brewbachers
BRMUG's Meetings at a Glance Send ideas to newsletter@brmug.org .			

times, Macintosh is also becoming a collection point for justifications for getting Macintoshes. By the way, the Macintosh Justification web area is already at Part 11. There are some real neat items here. I suggest that everyone go read this stuff. It will help you explain away a lot of the arguments (mostly false) that non-Mac users have -- not to mention make you feel better about your own choice.

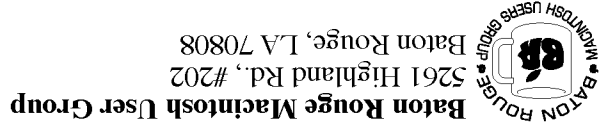
Secondly, Ric is publishing a lot more from readers. Macintosh is becoming a central point for folks to discuss the Macintosh world. He has always had Reader Reports, but more and more reader excerpts are showing up on the front web page. At first glance, it might look like the Macintosh web site is becoming a central archive of complaints. Instead, the reports can be divided into categories. Some are warnings to others about problems that have been observed. Some are reports about issues with vendors. But instead of raw

complaints, they are experiences. Ric is providing a way for people to focus on problems and find solutions.

Ric Ford, without heading there initially, is achieving a dream of many. He is providing a way for individuals to work together to help each other. Macintosh has become a conduit for people to help each other with their Macintosh related issues. Someone writes in about a problem or looking for an answer. Within days, numerous different solutions show up. Macintosh is becoming a critical piece of the Macintosh success story.

And it has become a shining point for the future. Macintosh gives us a place to look toward in the future, a reason to expect continued success next year. And the years after. As the balance changes and Apple's future unfolds, we will know that Ric Ford and Macintosh is still there helping the owners and the users of Apple products.

by Isaac Traxler



This Month:
Holiday Gathering
 at Bluebonnet Brewbachers

Hiroshima 45
Chernobyl 86
Windows 95

**THIS NEWSLETTER IS RECEIVED BY ALL
 BRMUG MEMBERS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND
 REPRESENTATIVES.**

The Baton Rouge Macintosh Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to Macintosh Users. Our mission is to help bring these users together in order to keep them informed of Apple Computer, Inc.'s trends, visions, and educate them on how to best use this most cost effective, easiest and friendliest of all platforms: **The Macintosh.**

If you are in the position of selling, supporting, or using the Apple Macintosh computer or any of Apple's products, we would like your participation and support for the benefit of our membership and your customer base.

Everyone is invited to attend the meetings. For a complimentary newsletter, or flyers to give out to others, or any information about the group contact the following BRMUG Ambassador: Isaac Traxler, President, (504) 926-1552, e-mail: president@brmug.org. We'll be most happy to talk to you about the Macintosh!

Send this form with \$15 (\$10 with copy of current school id for students) check payable to BRMUG to: BRMUG Treasurer, 5261 Highland Road, #202, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

BRMUG Membership Form 12/2005

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas: _____

